



It is the Holidays – Thanksgiving, Christmas and now, the New Year. My dad always told me time would fly by faster and faster the older I got. My dad knew what he was talking about. Larry J. Livingston

Chief Cade Hits Home Run!

By Larry J. Livingston



Chief Greg Cade

Virginia Beach Fire Chief Greg Cade made the BIG TIME this fall when President George W. Bush nominated the Chief to become the Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration with his headquarters being at 16825 S. Seton Ave., Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

I am enclosing the e-mail I sent Chief Cade on behalf of VBCERT below:

Chief Cade,

Knowing that your inbox is over-run at this time of year I do feel compelled to add to your inbox due to recent developments in your career. A note of congratulations just does not seem appropriate for the honor which has been paid you by George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, and other members of his administration in Washington. And in your case, the honor of going home, back to Maryland, as the Number One Fire Chief in the United States has to be overwhelming to you and your family.

With the above said, please allow me to say on behalf of my fellow Virginia Beach CERT Team Members that we are proud to have been a part of your fire department since being officially incorporated into the department in the spring of 2006. I know that your new job will entail tremendous responsibility and there will be times when you will again wish you were on the back of that 1948 Mack but you will arise to the occasion time after time

and make us all proud to say we knew you when you were the Fire Chief in Virginia Beach.

My wife Sheila and I discussed your new job over our dinner last night in Williamsburg where we like to celebrate our wedding anniversaries. It was our 37th. We both thought about the pleasure of having such a nomination as you and your wife received on your 35th anniversary. The thought was overwhelming.

Good luck to you and your family and may you enjoy tremendous success in your new duty station.

Merry Christmas,

Larry J. Livingston
Virginia Beach **CERT**
Virginia Beach Fire Department

I know that everyone joins me in wishing Chief Cade much success in his new job which will begin officially as soon as the United States Senate has confirmed his nomination.

Reflections on the Past 8 months

By Cookie Ketcham

So, I was sitting at my desk at the Sportsplex planning for the new Special Events Season when a friend (?) of mine called and said, "You need to apply for this job!" I did and lo and behold, Cappy was looking for a clone! We both happen to have weird nicknames (our secret identities), love to ski, have long blond



Cookie Ketcham

hair and love working with people. So here I am at the Fire Training Center wondering what in the world happened! I'm not sure I have ever been busier in my entire life – but then



I've always said my motto is "Another day – another adventure"! And what an adventure it's been! I have climbed on rubble piles, searched fields filled with burning cars and bodies, been a victim in a triage video, gotten a flu shot at a mass dispensing exercise, learned to speak in front of large groups, expanded my teaching skills tenfold and learned a whole new language with words like "Incident Commander", "cribbing" and "Helispot". The good part is that I have met the most wonderful people in the world! Not only do they volunteer to help others, they have been so helpful to me – I can't say enough about them! I could not do this job without them – the leadership team has been awesome to help run the show and also to volunteer when I call. And the membership has been great at showing up when they can at any and all events.

I suppose the people that volunteer to help themselves, their families and their neighbors just naturally help all the time. The VBCERT volunteers have stood in the hot sun passing out RUE stickers, they have marched in the cold at the Fire Department Centennial Parade (the shortest parade in the world), they have come to teach during the day at ECPI when I have asked them, they come to mentor the new classes, and especially, they come, rain or shine, early or late to help direct traffic or do crowd control at road races and fireworks displays! Who could ask for more?

At the end of the day, all I can say, is this is the best job in the world and I feel extraordinarily lucky to have been chosen for this job and to work with all of you. Thank you!

Cookie

District Chief Pokorski's involvement with VBCERT has paid dividends since he took over the program in the spring of 2006.

December marks my 2nd anniversary with VBCERT. I've seen a lot of changes take place – Chief Pokorski has made many of these changes seamless with the end result being a much better CERT Organization in Virginia Beach.

I asked the Chief to share some of his thoughts for the Holiday Season and he graciously provided the following wisdom for the team through the Holidays.

Thank you Chief!
Larry J. Livingston

Family – Health – Friends

*By Paul Pokorski,
District Chief, Virginia Beach Fire Dept.*

With the Holiday Season now upon us, and the New Year about to begin, it's time to take stock of all that is important. Family and Health certainly top the list of things most important and things to be cherished. Friends certainly come to mind when speaking of these topics too.

When Friends come together to help and protect the Families and Health of Neighbors in times of distress, one can only ask: "Where do such Friends come from"?

The willingness to help comes from the heart and soul, and incorporated with good training and a focused mission, we can all be our "brothers' keeper". That is where this fine organization (VBCERT) comes into play.

On behalf of Chief Cade and the members of the Virginia Beach Fire Department, I want to thank all the members of VBCERT for their past and continued support and participation in this worthy organization. In keeping with the spirit of the season, may the health of your families stay strong, and may the future be fruitful and rewarding.

Cappy Meredith is still a VBCERT Member!

By Larry J. Livingston

As most of you know Cappy Meredith has retired from the Virginia Beach Fire Department and her department of Life Safety Education. Cappy was with the VBFD for 29 plus years and taught school in the City of Virginia Beach for 1 year prior to coming aboard at the fire



department for a total of more than 30 years service to the city and its communities.

During my two years of involvement with VBCERT and the fire department I have been bewildered as to how Cappy did everything she did.



Cappy Meredith holding a stuffed bear in Virginia Beach Fire Department turn-out gear with Kenneth Muller, District Commander – Green Team.

From the onset of VBCERT, Cappy has been the manager of CERT including its recruitment, training, and the procurement of grant money to pay for the program. This was, within itself, a full-time job. But remember, Cappy's official responsibility to the fire department was Life Safety Supervisor. The combination made Cappy a

very busy lady – and she handled it in a dignified manner, always making VBCERT proud. I have met Cappy's husband, Joey, on several occasions. He and Cappy make the perfect couple. They enjoy life. They realize that you get out of life only what you put into life. Joey and Cappy get a lot out of life.

Cappy asked me to take her out on recruitment assignments. You'd better believe I will take her out any time I can get her in front of an audience because I will learn a lot from her about recruitment and the CERT program in general.

The Green Team has picked up one heck of a person when they officially put Cappy Meredith on their roster.

Congratulations Cappy – we look forward to having you serve with the team – the VBCERT Team we all love and respect because it was you who made it that way.

Nighttime Search and Rescue

By Joseph Marrazzo

Those who didn't get the chance to attend the night training on Friday the 17th of November missed a wonderful opportunity to experience nighttime SAR. We were placed into two groups, one for the burn building and one for the rubble pile. My group started with the burn building.

Safety Lesson 1: On the dark road leading to the structure look down. The first four of us stepped on a simulated live wire that none of us saw. We then proceeded to the field in front of the burn building which contained 2 burning and 1 standing car. [I love the smell of burning cars in the evening it smells like ...*home*].

Safety Lesson 2: Remember to give burning cars a wide berth; you never know if the tires or gas tank will blow. Also there's no way of knowing if there is hazmat on board. It took us a few seconds to line up alongside the field and start our search. Walking through

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the dark, soggy field even at a snails' pace we still managed to loose our line.

Tip 1: If you are falling behind call for the line to stop so you can catch-up. The line shouldn't back-up for you.

Tip 2: If you don't have enough people to span the field [and you probably won't] search until you get to the far end. When you reach the end of the field have the person on the end stand still and the line pivots around them. Now start seaching back towards your start point.{Repeat as needed.} A problem we found was having our mapper/log keeper as part of the line; this person should be following the line 2-3 paces back.

Tip 3: You don't need to inform the Incident Commander about every victim, body, or parts you find. So check with the IC before the search starts to establish procedure rather than calling on the radio every time you find something.

When we finished our search we proceeded to the burn building. Shortly after doing a perimeter search the power "went out".

Safety Lesson 3: When you are going to enter a "damaged" structure go to the utility connections and secure power, water [and gas if supplied]. We soon discovered another difficulty with a medium to large sized structure, more entrances/exits than teams. We decided to send 2 two person teams into the building to do a search.

Tip 4: In the unlikely event that you have enough people send a team to the "backside" of the building in case survivors go out that way.) Before we could get to the people calling out to us the whistle to end this portion of the drill went off. We had a little debrief then proceeded to the rubble pile for the second half of the drill. Working the rubble pile at night is a little different

than during the day. Things aren't as easy to see plus the pile had been "worked" earlier that day so there were loose sections.

Safety Lesson 4: Pick your footing carefully, just because it doesn't move when you wiggle it doesn't mean it will support your weight. We had an opportunity to test that safety lesson, when, after two teammates had used a piece of rubble as a step it gave way under me. If I hadn't been holding onto rubble further up the pile my leg would have dropped into the void below possibly breaking or at least spraining something. We also ran into a little confusion about referring to locations on the pile.

Tip 4: When you come upon a damaged or collapsed building or a pile of rubble the side you first see is side A the other sides are B, C, D etc. moving clockwise around the pile (that's to your left)). After we found the victim there was a demonstration of the search dog. The dog found the victim in under 1 minute. We closed the evening in the classroom going over our mistakes and what we could do better. We also discussed the possibility of doing this again in individual districts. I think it would provide a tremendous opportunity to CERT members if we could do more night drills, especially, if we could vary the scenarios.

Virginia Beach Lumberjack Competition

By Larry J. Livingston

I attended the 1st Annual Virginia Beach Lumberjack



COMMUNITY EMERGENCY
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Competition at Mt. Trashmore Park October 14th.

Kenneth Muller and Cookie Ketcham met me out at the park. Cookie had set up the competition while she worked with the Parks Department and prior to coming to VBCERT. We were there to evaluate it as a possible function for use with VBCERT.



Chain saw using a lawn-mower motor.

I did not anticipate too much participation – we live in a city with less and less land for farms and forests. I was wrong – the crowd was estimated to be over 4,000 people. All the bleacher seats were taken and people were standing 6 deep to see the various contestants compete.



The two-person handsaw requires concentration, muscle and a whole lot of skill.

Stihl came on as a sponsor somewhat late in the process of setting up the Lumberjack event. But Stihl showed up and supported the event to its fullest.

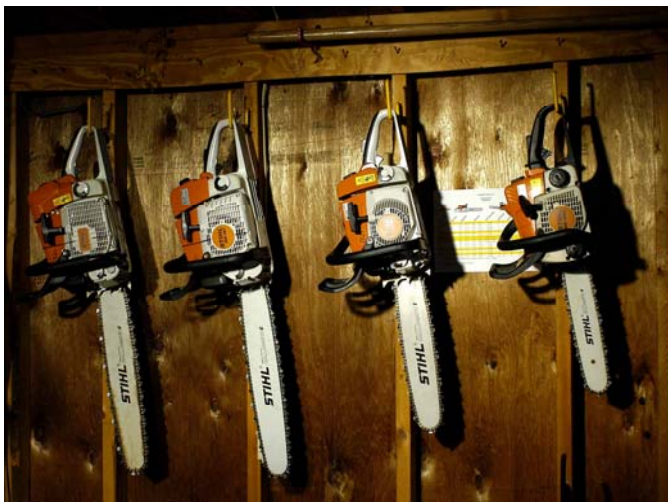


No one should think the Lumberjack event is an all male competition. The young lady above is the same lady who graces Stihl's new Stihl 441 Chopper shown below.





Stihl has a group of professionals available to show and educate attendees on all Stihl equipment. It is good equipment – I know – the saws below are stored in my equipment barn and are ready for use in time of emergency.



Whenever buying a saw, get a saw large enough to meet your demands. But do not get a saw so large you cannot use it properly. Maintain extra chains and guide bars so as to always have a properly running saw – it can be the difference of life and death.

I hope Stihl and the Virginia Beach Parks Department will continue with the Lumberjack Competition at Mt. Trashmore in October of every year.

Cookie and Larry Travel to Pungo for a Breakfast Meeting

By Larry J. Livingston

On the morning of November 21st it was chilly as I left my home and headed south on Independence Boulevard to I-264 at 5:00AM. As I came up the on-ramp I used my cell phone to call Cookie. Cookie reported she was about 2 miles in front of me. Cookie and I have started working really well together – we don't normally have to wait for each other at the FTC. We had to pick up supplies from the FTC and meet with the Pungo Kiwanis Club at 7:00AM.

A lot of people don't know the joy of putting on a Power Point Presentation to a group of people you've never met and they give you no time to set up the equipment or check to make sure everything is working properly. I normally just pray a lot during these times.

But as always, we had a delightful group of Kiwanis Members present and there was some very strong interest in what we were presenting to them. The payoff is when you see those people sitting in the classroom preparing for their practical and graduation.

Jim Hertz, a graduate of Class 21, arranged for Cookie and I to come out to meet with the Pungo Kiwanis.

Lockheed Martin – 8 Hours of Training

By Larry J. Livingston

Cookie and I again headed out early on the morning of December 1st on our way to Lockheed Martin to do a first in Virginia Beach – teach all day (8 hours) the various segments of CERT to a group of people encouraged by their employer, Lockheed Martin, to participate.

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Nervous? I think it is safe for me to say that Cookie and I were nervous. But a lot of planning had gone into this opportunity to take VBCERT into the workplace and we knew we had a job to do. We did that job. We could not let our friend Mary Russo at Citizens' Corps down. Mary had been instrumental in getting Cappy, Cookie and me together with the Lockheed Martin people.

There were people asking for more training than Cookie and I could provide. We simply went through the information from FEMA and went over it making our audience fully aware that they were getting an 'awareness' class and they should enter into the full VBCERT training. And even after the full training offered by VBCERT many of our members go on to do other parts of fire / rescue / medical / terrorism.

We will definitely have recruits from Lockheed Martin. Some we had to send to Chesapeake and Suffolk.

Virginia Beach Citizens' Police Academy

By Larry J. Livingston

December 5th – I was invited to speak to the Virginia Beach Citizens' Police Academy at the Courthouse Complex.

I was absolutely shocked to hear two young ladies speak up and say they were signed up for the January 8th class. This is always fantastic news for any recruiter and particularly me. I have a strong faith in what VBCERT is doing and the quality of the people we have in our teams. And I see our teams becoming even stronger due to the influx of new recruits from the Police Citizens' Academy, Lockheed Martin, and the Pungo Kiwanis Club.

Smoke Alarms

By Larry J. Livingston

Everyone knows the fire department goes out of its way to promote smoke alarms. And as a friend of mine, Billy Mills, said to me one day recently, "Smoke alarms save lives."

Tom Thomas, Lee Kimble and I accompanied officers from the 3rd Precinct into the Northridge Community. We had absolutely no idea as to what we were going to be doing – we had smoke alarms and paperwork. We did get smoke alarms into the hands of several adults with the proper paperwork completed.



MPO Leta Krieger passes out trash bags to the children of Northridge.

Master Police Officer Leta Krieger of Crime Prevention at the 3rd Precinct set up a table with crime prevention literature and plastic bags to put trash in. Officers R. A. McGraw and J. Cocca were available to communicate and bond with the kids.

The city had out representatives from the Parks and Public Works Departments working with kids to clean up the community.

Captain Steven Smith from the 3rd Precinct met with members of the Northridge Civic League and other interested adults in the community.

By the end of the 2 hours we were in the community park I had witnessed some very important happenings. Kids were smiling. Police Officers were interacting with the young people by swinging with them, playing ball and just generally bonding with the kids. The photos below will provide you with an idea as to how these police officers interacted with everyone in the park that day.

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MPO Leta Krieger passes out trash bags to the children of Northridge as Tom Thomas and Lee Kimble look on.



Officer McGraw plays with young children on swings in the park.

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Some of the young people walk by as others pick up trash in Northridge.

Young people gather at an intersection in the park. It is remarkable how one wrong turn here in this park can wreck lives forever or make a future of prosperity for many lives.



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Officer McGraw plays ball with young people at left and below.

Officer Cocca struggles for control of the ball in the photo bottom left.



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Officer Cocca shows off his ability to jump rope.



Officer McGraw holds the jump rope while of neighborhood's young people shows Officer Cocca how to jump rope.

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Lynwood Spruell at left fills out paperwork for his smoke alarm.

Captain Smith talks with an officer of the Northridge Civic League below.

The goal of the city and the many employees and volunteers is to see young people smiling (below left) because they're being taught how to take pride in their community.



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Communities such as Northridge need help. With the police, public works and parks department along with VBCERT can make a tremendous difference in communities where people want to be helped and are willing to invest a few hours of their time to clean their community of litter. It's all about people helping people.